

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 552

By Ramsey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Benjamin H. Ernst, Sr.,  
of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Benjamin H. Ernst, Sr., on September 10, 2015; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Ernst was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born in Bedford, Ohio, on June 2, 1918, Mr. Ernst moved with his family to Nashville in 1930, and the Ernsts started the Ernst Cereal Co., in the Melrose area; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Ernst attended Hume-Fogg High School from 1934 to 1935 and was an ROTC rifle champion with the 109<sup>th</sup> Cavalry of the Tennessee National Guard; and

WHEREAS, in 1936, Mr. Ernst graduated from Peabody Demonstration School. A member of Kappa Sigma at Vanderbilt University, he earned an LL.B. from Andrew Jackson University in 1940; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Ernst entered the United States Army Air Corps in 1942 and flew B-25 bombers in North Africa until he was shot down over Sicily. From July 1943 to April 1945, Mr. Ernst was held as a prisoner of war, most of which time he spent in Stalag Luft III, which was the prison camp depicted in the movie *The Great Escape*; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, when the Germans evacuated the prisoners and moved them to Stalag VIIA (Moosburg), Mr. Ernst met General George S. Patton when the general visited the camp after its liberation by Allied forces; and

WHEREAS, upon his return to the states, Benjamin Ernst served as the president of the Air Officers Club from 1946 to 1947, and, in the early 1950s, he ran as a Republican candidate

for the Tennessee State Senate, helping to establish the Republican Party in the Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ernst retired from First American National Bank in 1976 and from the Department of Finance and Administration in 1989; and

WHEREAS, he was a life member of the American Ex-POWs, American Legion Post No. 5, Elks Lodge No. 72, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Disabled American Veterans; and

WHEREAS, he was an honorary life member of the Nashville Mortgage Bankers Association and a former member of Union League Club of Chicago, Nashville City Club, and University Club at Vanderbilt; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin H. Ernst, Sr., was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Dorothy S. Ernst; his parents, B. Walter and Emily H. Ernst; and his brother, William H. Ernst; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ernst is survived by his son, Benjamin H. Ernst, Jr.; and his niece, Lisa Ernst; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Ernst, Sr., was baptized at Vine Street Christian Church; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ernst leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Benjamin H. Ernst, Sr., a true American patriot, and reflect fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Ernst.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.